

IN THE SPECIFICATION

(1) Please replace paragraph [0096] on page 19 of the Specification with the following amended paragraph:

Argon plasma exposure prior to air plasma treatment imparts two major benefits on surface hydrophilicity. Firstly, there is an enhancement in water contact angle and absorption values compared to just straightforward air plasma, exposure. Also it permits air plasma treatment to be carried out at higher power levels without causing surface damage. Crosslinking of the polymer surface in this manner helps to retard the effects of oxidative degradation and formation of mobile low molecular weight species commonly associated with air plasma treatment. Similar improvements in hydrophilicity were found for other combinations of crosslinking gases (e.g. ~~N<sub>2</sub>~~ N<sub>2</sub>, He, Ne, Xe and Kr) and oxidising gases (e.g. ~~O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O~~ O<sub>2</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>O).